

MEMORIAL EXHIBITION
OF
PAINTINGS
BY
JOHN J. ENNEKING

BOSTON ART CLUB

MARCH 2ND TO 17TH, 1917, INCLUSIVE

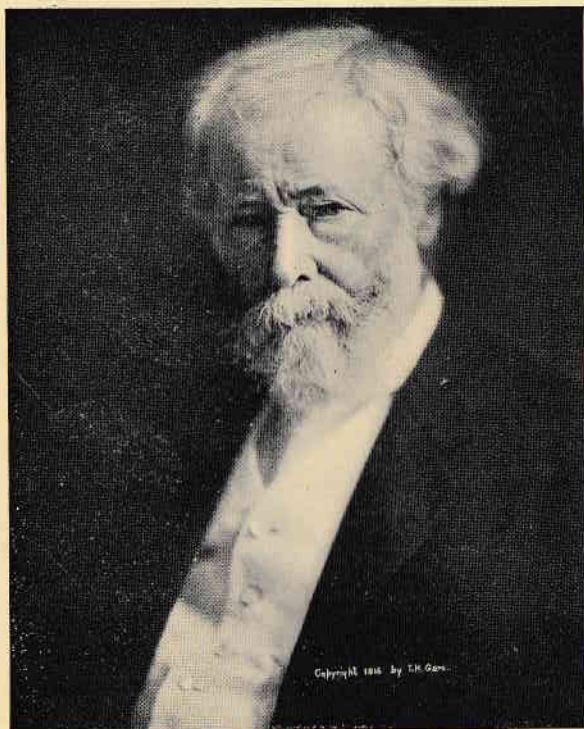
(SUNDAYS EXCEPTED), 11 A.M. 5 P.M.

OPEN FRIDAY EVENINGS

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Arrangement of coll fine
J. Allen Carter & Company



John J. Cusack

JOHN J. ENNEKING

was the interpreter *par excellence* of New England in painting, as was Edward MacDowell in musical idyls. He is not enrolled in any traditional school of Art. In the broad division of the classic and romantic brotherhoods his lot would fall among the latter. Impatient at dogma, cult, fashion, he could never conform to the trammels of academic convention, the crust of custom, the compulsion of arbitrary rules controlling the classic school. Emotion, freedom, idealism flooding his personality, were the impulses of his artistic self-expression. The bracing Hellenic joy of living breathed in the man and in his work. Steeped in sentiment, romance, mysticism, his mission was to lift the eyes of men to the higher realm of uncorrupted color harmonies lying above our material sphere.

Enduring art is created by depth of personal feeling. Enneking drew inspiration from his inner consciousness. In the course of his evolution he came to see more than was to be seen with the outer eye. He became intensely subjective. Turner said: "You cannot paint a landscape and leave man out." Enneking succeeded in doing this, because the landscape became a part of himself. Imaginatively and sympathetically he felt the varying moods of Nature — he absorbed and mirrored her soul and essence. The definition that an artist is the son of Nature but not her slave applies admirably to him. He co-ordinated light, color, mass, line, into a unified, lyrical, harmony, — what Coleridge called "some-

thing between a thought and a thing." His later canvasses are exhalations of human fancy, as subtle as a Beethoven Sonata, or Keats' Ode to a Grecian Urn. These exquisite tone poems are like a "Traumerie" rendered by a finely-trained orchestra of strings — never the blatant fortissimo of a full brass band.

Realizing that the perfection of harmony which constitutes an ideal picture seldom obtains in external landscape, he drifted away from the letter of Nature and into the spirit of himself. In explanation of this course he drew analogy with the Scriptural doctrine that the Natural Man is bad and must be regenerated. As one critic has expressed the matter: For an artist to try to paint like Nature is to ignore the nature of paint. His productions were half Nature — half Enneking. There is nothing of the kodak about his later work — the delineator was subordinate to the chromaticist — light was more important than form — he thought in terms of color more than of boundary lines. No one would try to identify one of his finest paintings as "about half-a-mile beyond Mud Creek."

When working on his sketching grounds at North Newry, Maine, or at the Stony Brook Reservation, Massachusetts, Enneking would go forth at the break of day to make transcripts *a premier coup* of the physical anatomy of a hillside pasture or woodland rill. This realistic study he would set aside in this studio perhaps for a year or more. When the mood was upon him he would transfer the study to a large canvas, preserving the essentials of the objective, historic



A Cold Snap, Speckle Mountain

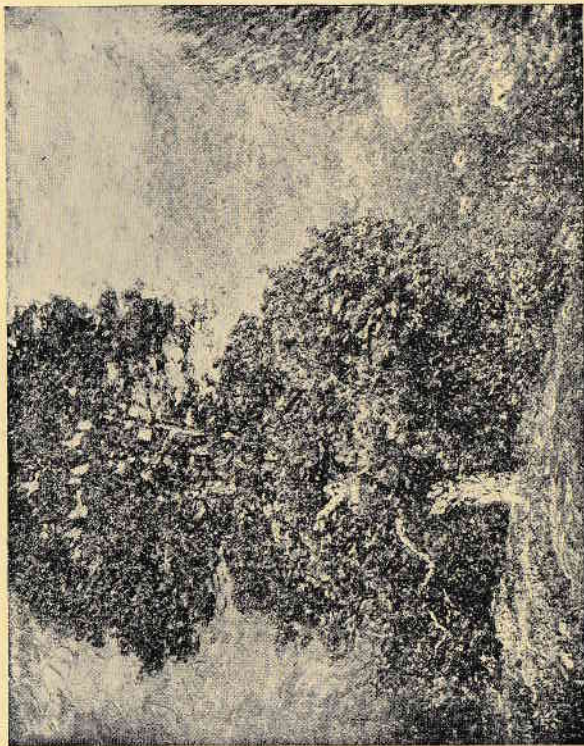
copy of Nature, and adding the vital emotions he felt in the presence of this particular landscape. That gave "character" to the canvas. He eliminated the non-aesthetic elements and by a process of building up the picture, sometimes in several layers of pigment, he poetized the whole subject, enveloped it in luminous waves of light, spiritualized it by thought and love until it became a shimmering, transfigured, tonal harmony. This sumptuous "studio version" of the preliminary study achieved the unusual combinations of delicacy, naivete, power.

Unity is a preeminent characteristic of Enneking, both unity of mass and line, and unity of color. It offended his soul to find three or four pictures embraced within a single frame. In his final period he chose a single color-plane as the dominant motif of a picture, creating symphonic themes in old rose, pale green, watery blue, pearly grey, golden russet. In laying out the color scheme of a picture he had a dictum: One plane is great; two planes, good; three planes, bad. He also said: Poetry resides in the middle distance.

Enneking spoke of his paintings as "impressions," though he could hardly be called a disciple of Manet or Monet. He was a devotee of Art rather than of artists. If there was any favorite master he admired, it was Monticelli, who "painted with crushed jewels." After he had learned the grammar of Art, chiefly in the studio of Daubigny in Paris, Enneking expressed his original ideas in a technical language of his own. His impressionism was never a matter of vivid

greens and violets, yellow lights and purple shadows; nor was he of that "cult of the innocent eye," the pleinairists, who held that fleeting impressions should be instantaneously imprisoned and a picture completed on the spot — *aus einem Guss*, to use Enneking's expression. He made glorious sketches in this manner, but his final distinction was won from canvases evolved by superimposing his inner emotions in the quiet seclusion of his studio. He divided tones into their primary elements and obtained color vibrations by laying on fresh paint in gentle, juicy pounces with a narrow brush, carefully tucking in the edges of his strokes to preserve a delicate, volatile play of light. Sometimes he wove color in and out like the fabricator of an oriental carpet. His range of values was narrow — the result of shortening up deep shadows more than of subduing high lights. Bold, bituminous Rembrandtesque *chiaroscuro* was not his forte. He painted in quiet half-lights for he seldom introduced a broad expanse of sky requiring highest luminosity.

Three aspects of New England sylvan landscape were especially appropriated and wonderfully interpreted by Enneking. First, the November twilight when the autumnal sun, glowing but chill, crept to rest behind gaunt, somber oaks to which the last fluttering leaves were clinging. Second, the trout brook gurgling through carpeted woods around mossy banks and lichen-covered rocks, and expanding in a cool, sparkling, translucent pool you would wish to wade in and scatter the startled fingerlings to their sheltered



The Oak

nooks. Third, the wooded intervale with wraiths of mist rising from the valley and distant mountains, modeled by passing clouds, visible through a harp of quivering trees aspiring in the immediate foreground. He happily caught the elusive humidity of New England atmosphere—the palpable dampness of the mountain valley, the dewy mist of a Spring morning, the vaporous haze of Indian Summer, the moisture of the winter snowflake.

Enneking loved a tree with the pantheistic devotion of a Japanese. Like Professor Shaler he felt that there was a living consciousness beneath the shaggy bark which claimed a brotherhood with man. He loved trees—in the Springtide when they lavishly toss their perfumed blossoms at man's feet, in the Autumn when they wrap themselves in their variegated Paisley shawls, and especially in winter disabille, "with their wigs off," to use Holmes' homely metaphor.

"Bare ruined choirs
Where late the sweet birds sang,"

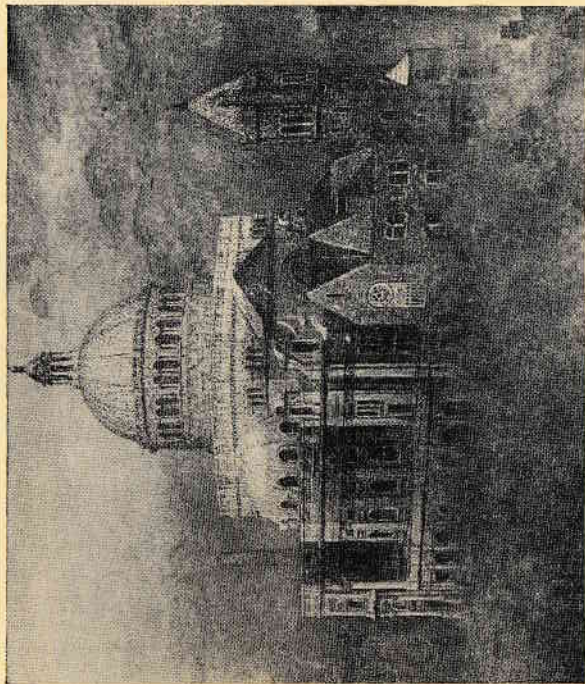
he portrayed in palpitating line and singing color. The radiant, living, growing surface of the earth is the Temple of Beauty in which he worshipped and felt so tensively the mysterious sensation of human consciousness.

"One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man;
Of moral evil and of good
Than all the sages can."

Money could not buy Enneking — he declined munificent offers that he might be his own master and work out his finest ideals. But if an earnest, ambitious, single-minded young student came to him for advice at his studio, he would spend half a day of his valuable time and, stripping off his coat in his enthusiasm, would deliver a rapid fire dissertation on the principles of Art, of a temperamental richness comparable to Whistler's Ten O'clock Lectures or the Conferences of William Morris Hunt.

His generous and genuine nature went into his work with such whole-souled depth of feeling that his pictures do not reveal themselves fully at first introduction. Their charms unfold with continued acquaintance. They are treasures to those Illuminati whose receptive minds and understanding hearts grow by daily contemplation of the beautiful through the windows of the soul.

Ralph Davol



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The Mother Church

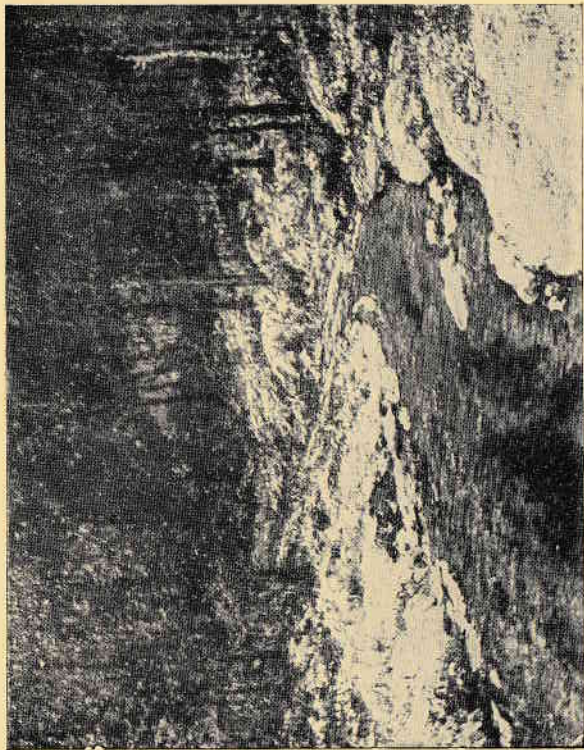
November. B. a. c.

CATALOGUE

1. Fairmount Bridge, Winter
2. Winter Night
3. The Apple Tree on the Hillside
4. A Mountain Vista
5. The Glow of Dawn
6. The Hush of Autumn
7. Indian Summer
8. Woodland Mist, Winter
9. The Oak
10. The Upper Pasture
11. Green Sunset
12. Early Spring
13. Clouds
14. The Mountain Brook
15. The Swimming Pool, Springtime
- T 16. December Thaw *gold medal PPEx 1915*
- T 17. Twilight
18. A Cold Snap, Speckle Mountain
19. The Sandy Cove
20. The Forest Trail
21. Spring - Hillside
22. Afternoon, Late Autumn
- T 23. Afterglow, In the Woods
24. Early Autumn
25. Springtime in Byfield
26. The Pasture, Autumn

*E. + Davis only 2 landscapes
in N E who got gold medals*

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|-------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 27. | The Lost Lake | <i>Lent by</i> |
| 28. | Mother Church | Dr. John W. Estabrooks |
| T 29. | Afterglow | Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy |
| 30. | The Oxen Ploughing | Mrs. Galen L. Stone |
| 31. | Evening Gold | Mrs. John M. Longyear |
| 32. | The Blue Symphony | " " " " |
| T 33. | After Sunset | " " " " |
| 34. | The Golden Hour | Mr. J. H. Westfall |
| 35. | Summer Twilight | Mr. G. Perera |
| 36. | Saddleback Mountain, North Newry, Me, | Mr. F. E. Stanley |
| 37. | The Dreaming Hour of Day | Mr. J. E. Clark |
| 38. | Sunset | Mr. Wm. Lyman Johnson |
| 39. | The Trout Brook | Mrs. David P. Kimball |
| 40. | Golden Haze | Mr. Franklin A. Snow |
| 41. | The Head of the Flock | Mr. Charles H. Pepper |
| 42. | Winter - Afternoon, Blue Hills | Mrs. Prescott Warren. |
| 43. | Autumn, Trout Brook | Mr. Wilfred A. French |
| 44. | Late Twilight | Mr. H. C. Spiller |
| | | Mr. Francis F. Hicks |



December Thaw

JOHN J. ENNEKING

By A. J. Philpott

From Boston Globe of Nov. 17, 1916.

John J. Enneking's death will be a great loss to American art, for not only was he one of the world's great landscape painters but he was, and has been for half a century, one of the healthiest and most inspiring influences in the American art world.

It is as a great painter of landscapes that he will live as long as painting lives in the world. He was an artist in every fibre of his being and was just as fresh and virile in his work at 77 as he was at 30.

Few artists in the world had such a keen sense for all the varying beauties of nature; for the seasonal changes in our New England landscape; for the rich color of our Autumns; for the soft greens of our Spring; for the mystery and atmospheric depths of the Northern Winter, and for the poetry of everthing in nature.

And he was constantly discovering new and subtler beauties; constantly studying with all the enthusiasm of youth, and communicating his enthusiasm and his discoveries to others. In all this he was a true artist — big, generous, open-hearted and a little cross at times with the way the world of art seemed to be wagging.

It was for all this, and the man that he was, that the artists and architects, and professional people generally of Boston to the number of 1000 or more, gave John J. Enneking at the Copley Plaza Hotel a testimonial such as few artists have ever received.

After a banquet he was crowned with a laurel wreath and many present spoke from the fullness of the thought they had cherished about him, until the old gentleman

fairly trembled with emotion; and the cheer he got at the end of it all was one of those spontaneous, genuine things which it is well to hear. That was a great moment in the life of John J. Enneking, and in the art life of Boston and America.

Mr. Enneking studied and traveled much in Europe when he was a young man. He was a friend of Corot and Millet and he drank deep of the inspiration of the Barbizon group of artists.

But he never copied these men. Through their spirit, however, he saw more truly the beauties and the poetry of the American landscape.

He reveled in the glory of our Autumn sunsets for years until he was known as the "Sunset Painter," but as if to show his versatility he began to paint pictures surcharged with all the delicate beauty of Spring.

And he painted Summer landscapes that fairly blazed with light, and mountain brooks that were veritable mirrors of nature. And in all of them was poetry of a high order.

Some of his admirers felt even a musical quality in them — something more than rhythm. He painted a portrait occasionally, and once in a while he would paint a cattle picture. He also painted an occasional character picture — like some old clam digger along the coast, in whose face and form he saw something close to nature.

William Howe Downes

In the Boston Evening Transcript

The great quality in all his painting is its intense vitality, the expression of a temperament overflowing with energy and enthusiasm. Every new impression is marked by this zeal, which is that of an unwearying



The Swimming Pool, Springtime

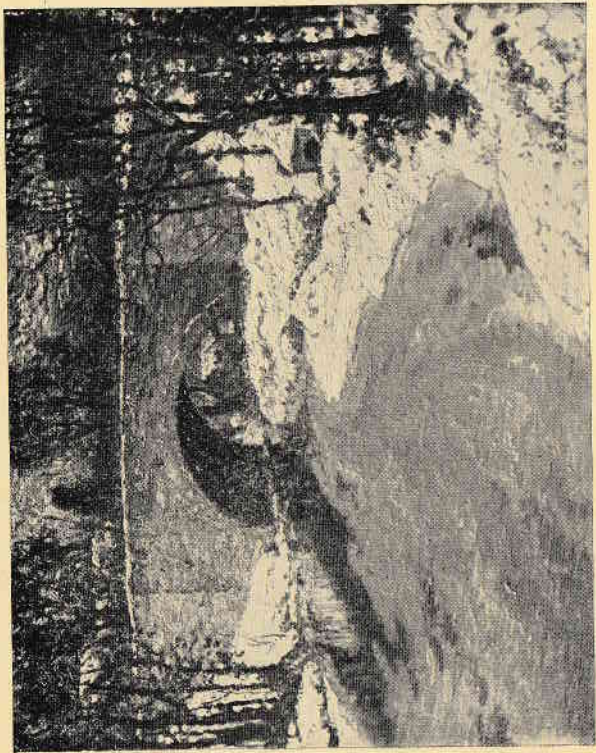
delight, a passionate and consuming desire for a greater splendor of light and color, a greater delicacy, a fuller and deeper manifestation of the beauty of the natural world. All means are good that subserve this purpose. A landscape painter often seems to be repeating the same motive or the same effect when his endeavor is to gain the most ample and rounded expression of which it is capable in his hands, to say the last word, so far as possible; and this applies to Mr. Enneking's pictures of twilight, sunset and afterglow, in which he has for many years sought to express himself, always with a fine loyalty to his own nature and feeling. The combination of reserve and tenderness in these pictures with a certain slumbrous splendor and depth is his note, his individual contribution to the suggestive and poetical side of his art. Touched with gentle melancholy, these colorful and dreamy woodland glades are haunted by eloquent memories, tinged by the mellow and subdued associations of a lifetime, and glowing with the embers of a sensitive imagination. The real is brought into congenial relationship with the ideal, the spirit of the hour and the season broods over the silhouettes of the boughs which twinkle against the fading gold and crimson of the skies, and penetrates the shadows in which one feels rather than discerns the gray ledges, the silver birch saplings, and the rich tapestries of the dead leaves and the soft brown earth.

The Christian Science Monitor

By Ernest Sherburn

"John J. Enneking shares with other painters of note the ability to get the "portrait of a place," an ability compounded of a poetic temperament and long experience, not

to say experiment, with brushes, canvas and paint. A quality much rarer is his tendency toward universality of expression. Somehow with all his individuality he is close enough in touch with the basic sentiment of the race to produce pictures that three times out of five are wide in their appeal; that is, they express what many persons, not merely a few, have felt in the presence of nature in its varied moods of beauty. He produced lyrics based on thorough study of nature. In his spring pictures, beneath the tender, juicy new turf, one is conscious of a solid structure of earth and rock. His "Winter Morning in the Woods" is typical of his ability to catch a mood. As in most of his works Mr. Enneking has here secured a dominant tone — green in this canvas. The artist has felt the cold air so keenly that it seems palpable in his picture, seems to "open and shut" as they say down in Maine on a gray day. In such pictures as "Storm in the Berskhires" Mr. Enneking manages to capture the sense of air in volumes. As is his custom, the artist has kept the whole pure beauty; there is no insistence on the realistic side of his theme. Indeed, there is not theme insistence in any of his works."



Fairmount Bridge, Winter